



Jeff Mursau

STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 36TH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

TESTIMONY ON AB 412 Protecting Senior Citizens 10/16/07

Representative Jeff Mursau

Chairman Kleefisch and members of the Assembly Committee on Criminal Justice:

Thank you for providing me with the opportunity to testify before the committee today. Assembly Bill 412 will offer additional protections to some of the most vulnerable members of society; senior citizens. Currently, one out of eight US citizens is age 65 or older. By the year 2030, it is estimated that one in four people in this country will be 65 or older.

While any crime is troublesome, it is of particular concern when somebody targets senior citizens, who many times cannot defend themselves. And sadly, there are those who specifically prey upon senior citizens. While seniors are statistically less likely to be victims of violent crimes, they are more likely to be victims of fraud. In one case the FBI uncovered, a fraudulent telemarketing company directed nearly 80 percent of its calls against seniors.

AB 412 creates a new penalty enhancer for crimes committed against an individual who is age 65 or older. The penalty increases provided under this enhancer are the same as those provided under the hate crimes penalty enhancer and apply only if the underlying crime is one set forth in the Criminal Code.

The penalties enhancers are as follows: for felonies, the maximum fine is increased by \$5,000 and the maximum term of imprisonment is five years longer. If the crime was a Class A misdemeanor, it is elevated to a felony with a maximum fine of \$10,000 and a maximum term of imprisonment of two years. The penalties for other misdemeanors are increased to a maximum fine of \$10,000 and a one year jail term.

Recently, The Delaware Attorney General's Task Force on Senior Victims recommended that state statutes be amended to include "enhanced penalties for crimes committed against the elderly." This legislation is based on those recommendations and enacts stronger penalties for criminals who victimize seniors.

Thank you for the opportunity to present this testimony and I welcome any questions you may have.